

WAIKIKI

LIVABLE
COMMUNITY
PROJECT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction

Waikiki is a place of legendary beauty and immense history. In different periods it has been a place of lily ponds and coconut groves, and taro fields. For centuries it was the home of Hawaiian Chiefs and royalty. This century ushered in a golden era of tourism. The place name Waikiki means Spouting Water, for the springs that run beneath its surface. Restoring water features, preserving Diamond Head, protecting the beach and reefs, incorporating native plants and building materials, using Hawaiian place names, and honoring important figures and events, are all components of a “Hawaiian Sense of Place” that must be cherished by any effort to plan Waikiki.

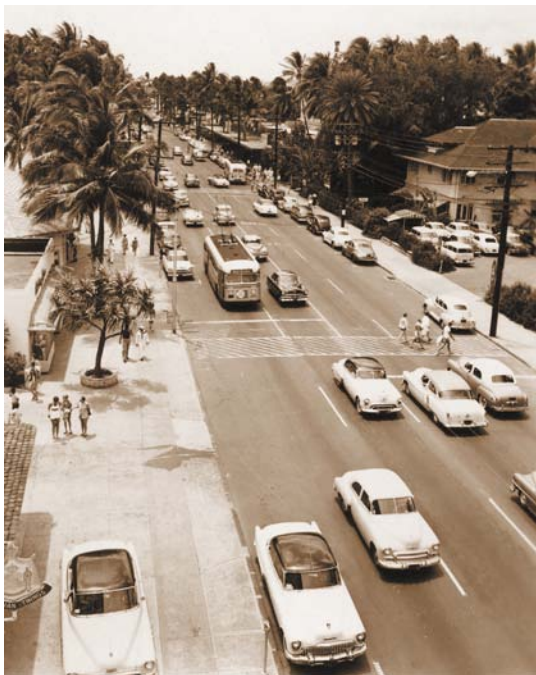
Waikiki Livable Communities asks the question: How can the transportation system be redone so that one can arrive in and circulate through Waikiki and still appreciate its Hawaiian sense of place? It is generally agreed that one important way is to protect and enhance it at the street scale and on the sidewalks. Thus, a priority value in this work is the moniker “Pedestrian First.” We set out to determine what that would mean, and what it would involve.

Waikiki today is a very dense area with lots of excitement on its streets. It is less than 1-1/2 miles in length and with total land area of under two square miles. Over 19,000 people live in Waikiki; mostly in high rises and multi-unit structures. There are more than 1,600 businesses employing 13,000 workers, primarily in the retail, hospitality and food service sectors of the economy.

Congestion in Waikiki’s streets is inevitable, but with that congestion comes an excitement, a glamour, a magic that lasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Each day nearly 72,000 visitors jam the 31,700 visitor units, and comprise almost 44% of the statewide visitor census. No wonder it is called our “economic engine.”

In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s local residents started to shun Waikiki as the place they “loved to hate.” There was nothing for them, no place to park, it was a concrete jungle. Government and the community at-large became concerned and after several rounds of master planning, took action to revitalize Waikiki. These planning efforts culminated in George Kanaha’s 1994 watershed book “Restoring Hawaiianess to Waikiki.” Kanaha called for Waikiki to become a “community of Aloha.”

Improved landscaping, a historic marker signage program, fountains and statues, and free cultural events, were all designed to restore Hawaiianess and aloha, to be a new start. Major investments were made by the City in a Police Station, new bandstand and pond, renovated Natatorium, and the expanded Kuhio Beach Promenade along Kalakaua Avenue. It worked. Residents were returning to Waikiki, drawn by the ever-popular Brunch on the Beach and Sunset on the Beach. Private investment followed public investment. But still, there was one major area that needed to be addressed: transportation, circulation and pedestrian activity. The Waikiki Livable Communities Project was designed to start filling in those gaps of a revitalized Hawaii.



Top: Waikiki Road (now Kalakaua Avenue), 1890. Ray Jerome Baker Collection, Bishop Museum.

Middle: Kalakaua Avenue seen from Moana Hotel, 1954. Bishop Museum.

Bottom: Aerial View of Waikiki with the Moana Hotel in center, 1920. U.S. Army, Bishop Museum.

Livable Community Project Background

The Waikiki Livable Community Project (WLCP) is a federally funded planning study being conducted under a grant obtained from Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP) and federal funding from the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OMPO). The TCSP is a nationwide program providing cities and communities with grants to investigate the relationship between transportation and the community. Its goal is to improve transportation efficiency, reduce impacts on the environment, and minimize the need for costly future public infrastructure investments.

The transportation system in Waikiki serves Waikiki's visitors, businesses, workers and residents. Consequently, a wide variety of vehicle modes compete for space in Waikiki's streets, including private automobiles, public transit buses, tour buses, taxis, delivery vans and trucks, bicycles, mopeds, and electric vehicles. Equal in importance to the street network is the sidewalk network. Thousands of pedestrians walk to shops, restaurants, the beach and other attractions on a 24-hour basis.



The WLCP study is an opportunity to examine how Waikiki's system of public streets, sidewalks, and rights-of-way are used and, how the system might be improved. The study takes this broad view of transportation in seeking ways to make Waikiki a more livable community.

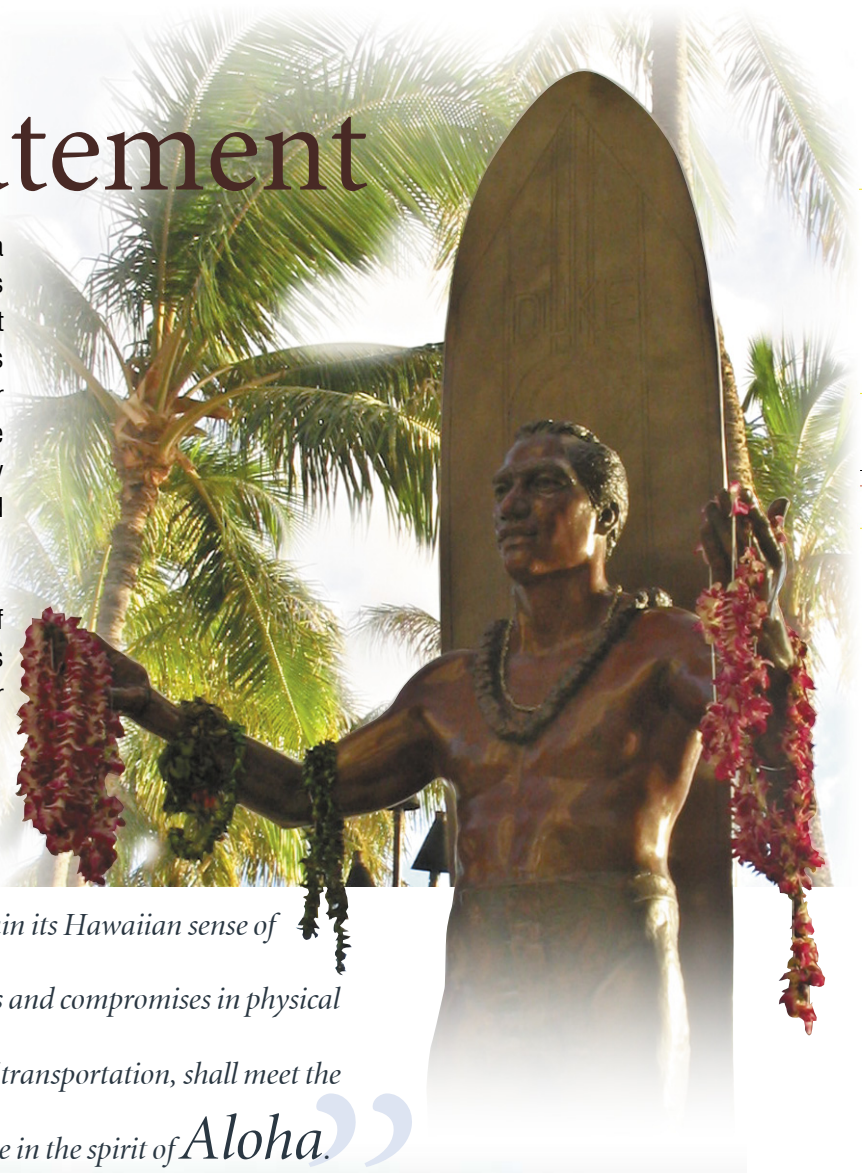
The WLCP study has been a community-based effort to solicit broad input on the issues, options, and opportunities for creating and achieving a shared vision of Waikiki. Through an extensive community outreach program, the WLCP has focused on ways to integrate past plans along with introducing new ideas and concepts for charting a course toward that vision.

The Livability and Mobility Report documents the Waikiki Livable Community Project, offering a set of visions and serving as a guide for the future of Waikiki. To all of the residents, businesses, and community organizations, who shared their vision and ideas in this effort, the Project Team wishes to extend our deepest "Mahalo."

Mission Statement

The Livability & Mobility Report provides a framework for enhancing what makes the streets and public spaces of Waikiki an important part of its allure and appeal to residents and visitors while still accommodating and improving their essential transportation functions. Waikiki's unique sense of livability is woven in its culture, history and development into a mature urban resort and residential community.

The WLCP'S mission statement is the result of community and stakeholder's input that establishes Waikiki's uniqueness as its guiding principle for efforts to enhance the livability in Waikiki.



Waikiki is a distinct, premier resort, residential and urban district. It must maintain its Hawaiian sense of place and economic vitality. Seeking solutions and compromises in physical planning, landscaping, and various modes of transportation, shall meet the needs of visitors, residents and employees alike in the spirit of Aloha.



Waikiki “Pedestrian First”

In Waikiki the pedestrian, visitor and resident alike, will come first. Waikiki will be a pedestrian-oriented resort and a pedestrian-oriented residential area. Walking will be the primary mode of getting around within Waikiki and it will be a pleasurable way to enjoy Waikiki.

*Pedestrian First Policy from
“Recapturing the Magic of Waikiki” (December 1999)
Joint City-State Task Force Report to Legislature*



Transportation in Waikiki

The movement of people, goods, and services is necessary for “making Waikiki work”. Tourists and residents need to shop, eat, play, work and move. In the past, there have been a number of major efforts by government to formulate goals and strategies to revitalize Waikiki as a “premier” visitor destination area.

During the work of this project a set of five “vision statements” was developed, tested, and adopted for each of three major corridors, mauka-makai streets, and the primary entryway.

The three major corridors are Kalakaua Avenue, Kuhio Avenue, and Ala Wai Boulevard which traverse the length of Waikiki. Numerous “mauka-makai” streets transect the major corridors to form a basic grid street pattern over most of Waikiki. Ala Moana Boulevard is the primary entryway to Waikiki, especially for arriving visitors. The vision statements that were formulated for these sets of streets highlight their unique functions and character in the Waikiki street system.

In 1999, a Joint City-State Waikiki Task Force was formed to examine policies and initiatives that could be developed to revitalize and improve Waikiki as a visitor destination area.

The Task Force consisted of State and City officials, as well as private sector and citizen participants. In December of that year, the Task Force issued their report “Recapturing the Magic of Waikiki, which contained a number of recommendations for Waikiki in the new millennium.

One of the most important recommendations of the Task Force report was the need to have a “Pedestrian First” policy in Waikiki. The report states: “We’ll know we have reached our goal when visitors and residents alike say, Waikiki is a walking paradise”.

This WLCP study was initiated, with a key starting point, of realizing the “Pedestrian First” policy in Waikiki. In order to make Waikiki more “livable”, the pedestrian walking experience on public sidewalks in Waikiki needed to be improved and enhanced. To identify the issues related to sidewalks, the WLCP study conducted pedestrian surveys for Kuhio Avenue, Kalakaua Avenue, and Ala Wai Boulevard.



The initial vision statements were developed by the Project Team during a Charette held in December 2001. They were discussed at various community meetings and refined to reflect a “shared vision” based on community input. The statements were endorsed by the WLCP Steering Committee and then presented and validated at subsequent Issues Update Meetings held in September 2002 and at a Public Workshop in October 2002.

Kuhio avenue

“Celebrating living in Waikiki”

Kuhio Avenue is Waikiki’s central pedestrian and transportation corridor. The avenue traverses the center of Waikiki. Along its frontage, Kuhio Avenue is a mixture of hotel, retail, dining/entertainment, office, and residential uses.

Kuhio Avenue is also a critical corridor for public transit in Waikiki. Six important City bus routes travel in both directions of Kuhio Avenue and, the high capacity BRT system will use Kuhio Avenue in the ewa-bound direction as part of a transit loop via Kalakaua Avenue and Kapahulu Avenue.

In addition to being a public transit corridor, Kuhio Avenue is utilized by: automobiles,

commercial (tour) buses, private buses, taxis, delivery vans and trucks, bicyclists, and rented cars and electric vehicles. These transportation modes travel to, and through Kuhio Avenue, many of which make periodic curbside stops for pick-ups and drop offs. Many of the properties that front the avenue have no off-street loading facilities and the curbside loading/unloading of goods and people poses a significant traffic congestion problem.

The public sidewalks along the avenue are active and vibrant. During the busiest periods of the day, there are thriving activities on the public sidewalk that include: transit patrons waiting for a bus, queues of passengers waiting to load on commercial tour buses, taxis loading or unloading passengers, truck drivers making deliveries to businesses and residents and visitors shopping and dining or just casual walking.



the Vision

vision statement

**Kuhio Avenue
will be Waikiki’s
“Main Street”,
where residents
and visitors will
gather.**

Kuhio Avenue will be transformed into a “Main Street”. The vision for Kuhio Avenue will be accomplished through the partnering of the City and the private sector to improve the public sidewalk space for the pedestrian. The sidewalks on both the mauka and makai sides will have wider sidewalks for greater pedestrian mobility and safety.

Extensive new landscaping including nearly 300 trees will provide pedestrians with visual relief and shade, new historic light fixtures, new textured quartzite paving and more street furniture including benches will give the streetscape character. Street Signage for motorists and pedestrians will be improved to be less cluttered and easier to understand.

A “sense of entry” will define both ends of Kuhio Avenue with new landscaped medians that will be visually appealing and help reduce traffic speeds for motorists entering the “Main Street” of Waikiki. Traffic conflicts and congestion at curbside will be greatly reduced through the development of bus pull-outs, providing exclusive time periods for large trucks to use curbside loading zones, designating additional curbside loading zones on



side streets mauka of Kuhio Avenue and developing “off-street” loading areas for smaller delivery vehicles.

Transit in the corridor will be improved through the fast and quiet electric bus vehicles. BRT transit stops will have platforms for level vehicle boarding.

Ala Wai boulevard

“A stage for recreation & culture”

Ala Wai Boulevard is the primary ewa-bound one-way traffic route traversing the length of Waikiki and links Waikiki to its neighboring communities (Kapahulu, McCully, Moiliili, Ala Moana/Kakaako). Along Ala Wai Boulevard, high rise residential buildings and hotels characterize the makai frontage, contrasting starkly against the waters of the Ala Wai Canal and the scenic backdrop of the Koolau Range on its mauka side.

The Ala Wai Canal is considered an aesthetic and recreational asset by residents of Waikiki and surrounding communities. The canal serves as a recreation area for canoeing, kayaking and fishing. Between Ala Wai Boulevard and the canal, the Ala Wai Canal Promenade is a popular area for walking, jogging, bicycling and watching water recreation in the canal. The canal provides an opportunity for transforming the Promenade into a gathering place for recreational users and an attraction for visitors and residents.

The Ala Wai Boulevard corridor is the primary outbound roadway for traffic leaving Waikiki. The boulevard, collects more and more traffic between Kapahulu Avenue to out-bound routes along Ala Moana Boulevard via Niu Street, McCully Street and Kalakaua Avenue. During the peak weekday morning (6:30 am – 8:30 am) traffic period, Ala Wai Boulevard is used as an alternative commuter through-route by many residents in the Kapahulu to Kahala area heading in the ewa direction beyond Waikiki.



the Vision

vision statement

**Ala Wai Boulevard
and Canal will
focus on recreation
and culture on the
land and in the
water.**

The vision for Ala Wai Boulevard will be achieved by enhancing and improving recreational walking, jogging and bicycling opportunities along the Ala Wai Canal Promenade.

Ala Wai Bicycle Study is considering options for developing a new bicycle path

along the Ala Wai Promenade between Kapahulu Avenue and Kalakaua Avenue. One option is to widen the Promenade into Ala Wai Boulevard for a new two-way bicycle path, and integrating it with the Promenade by providing complementary landscaping and additional street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles. Another option is to widen the Promenade for the bike path by cantilevering the walkway over the Ala Wai Canal. This could be done in conjunction with repairs to deteriorating sections of the existing canal wall.

To make the Promenade more safely accessible to pedestrians across Ala Wai Boulevard, more crosswalks will be provided and traffic signals will be timed to favor pedestrians and regulate traffic speeds.

Better continuity of pedestrian routes can be achieved by improving connections between the Promenade and existing pedestrian/bicycle paths along both sides of the canal. Decorative crosswalks at McCully Street and Kalakaua Avenue will allow more direct and safer crossings connecting sections of the Promenade. Signage will provide information on recreational walking and jogging routes, mileages and links to routes beyond Waikiki.



Kalakaua avenue

“One of the world’s greatest avenues”

Kalakaua Avenue is Waikiki’s main boulevard. Prior to the 1920’s, Kalakaua Avenue (formerly Waikiki Road) was the only improved roadway into Waikiki. During the period, a trolley system on Kalakaua Avenue was well used by Honolulu residents who traveled to Waikiki to enjoy its recreational amenities. Later, developers seeking to capitalize on Waikiki’s convenient access to the beach and Kapiolani Park’s recreational attractions began constructing hotels along Kalakaua Avenue.



Major hotels, shopping centers, stores, and restaurants line most of the length of Kalakaua Avenue. Providing valuable visual contrast are sections of the avenue fronting the lush open space at Fort DeRussy and the world renown Kuhio Beach.

In recent years the City has done extensive improvements to the public sidewalk space and beach along Kalakaua Avenue near Kuhio Beach. These improvements have included the installation of historic-style street lighting fixtures with planters and banner mounts; the widening of the sidewalk by approximately ten feet; extensive landscape improvements, a new Kuhio Beach comfort station; and textured sidewalk paving.

Beyond attracting high volumes of pedestrian activity, Kalakaua Avenue, is also Waikiki’s parade and “event” route. Numerous parades and events such as the Honolulu Marathon utilize the avenue. It is closed, periodically, to vehicular traffic and transformed into a “Pedestrian Mall” for the highly successful Brunch on Beach and Sunset on the Beach events, which have attracted visitors and drawn local residents back into Waikiki.

As a transportation corridor, Kalakaua Avenue serves automobiles, commercial (tour) buses, private transit shuttles, taxis, freight delivery vehicles and bicycles. The planned BRT route will follow Kalakaua Avenue from Saratoga Road to Kapahulu Avenue.

the Vision

vision statement

**Kalakaua Avenue
will be the
gathering place,
where Waikiki’s
main attractions
occur**

the save paving materials, landscaping, and décor. Pedestrian attractions will include sidewalk dining and shopping.

Improvements to Kalakaua Avenue will continue to extend pedestrian enhancements along the sidewalks. More landscaping, including shade trees, pavement improvements, street furnishings and resort character signage will make a walk down the avenue an inviting experience. Decoratively painted crosswalks will direct pedestrians to safe crossings and alert motorists.

The vision for Kalakaua Avenue continues to be accomplished through the partnering of the City and the private sector to improve the public sidewalk space for pedestrians.

This continuing transformation will join the sidewalks with adjacent private spaces by using

Building upon the success of the Brunch on the Beach events, a convertible event plaza fronting the Kuhio Beach Center will facilitate set up for similar types of events. The plaza will have special pavement treatment; street trees in planters that can be repositioned into the street; special curbing to facilitate pedestrian access; utility connections for food preparation, entertainment and lighting; and, a routine traffic detour plan when the plaza is activated.



Ala Moana boulevard

“A green gateway”

Ala Moana Boulevard is a major entry and exit route for Waikiki and it is the primary entry route for visitors arriving from the airport and harbor. Crossing over the Ala Moana Bridge into Waikiki, Ala Moana Boulevard is flanked on its mauka side by commercial uses and the Hobron Lane residential area. On its makai side, it passes the Ala Wai Boat Harbor, the Hawaii Prince Hotel, Ilikai Hotel; Hilton Hawaiian Village, including the new Hilton Kalia Tower; and, the broad, lushly landscaped open space fronting Fort DeRussy.

As the primary transportation gateway to Waikiki, Ala Moana Boulevard is utilized by a wide range of vehicles, including private automobiles, commercial (tour) buses, city buses, taxis, freight delivery trucks and vans, and bicycles. The planned BRT route will run along Ala Moana Boulevard as far as Kalia Road.

Ala Moana Boulevard is a major pedestrian route for visitors and residents walking between Waikiki and Ala Moana Shopping Center or Ala Moana Park. Pedestrians on Ala Moana Boulevard can also access the Ala Wai Canal Promenade on either side of the canal. The promenade on the ewa side of canal is invitingly wide and shaded by mature trees offering an enjoyable walk to the Hawaii Convention Center.



As the primary entry route for arriving visitors, Ala Moana Boulevard offers an opportunity to create a positive first impression of Waikiki that welcomes and establishes a sense of arrival to a very special place.

the Vision

vision statement

Ala Moana Boulevard will continue to be a major gateway in Waikiki, conveying a sense of arrival and welcome to visitors and residents.

The vision for Ala Moana Boulevard will be accomplished by the continued partnering of the City with the private sector to improve the public sidewalk space for pedestrians as properties fronting the boulevard are redeveloped. An example of this is the recently completed sidewalk area fronting Hilton Hotel's new Kalia Tower.

Ala Moana Boulevard will be transformed into Waikiki's primary gateway that will welcome visitors to a very special place for pedestrians. A new entry feature near the Ala Moana Boulevard Bridge will combine a "Hawaiian look" of landscaping, fire, water, and lava rock to welcome travelers to Waikiki. Pedestrians along

Ala Moana Boulevard will experience an enhanced pedestrian-friendly setting that will include more landscaping for shade and street furnishing such as benches, historic-style street lighting fixtures and trash receptacles. New resort character signage for place name and wayfinding will be unique to Waikiki. Decorative crosswalks will direct pedestrians to safe street crossings and alert motorists.



Mauka-Makai streets

“Creating neighborhoods with unique character”

Mauka-Makai streets provide important traffic and pedestrian circulation links between Kalakaua Avenue, Kuhio Avenue and Ala Wai Boulevard. Since most of Waikiki mauka of Kalakaua Avenue was originally developed as an affluent residential subdivision, the mauka-makai streets were originally two-way residential streets. In the late 1960's, many of the streets were converted to one way traffic flow to deal with increasing traffic in Waikiki and to improve circulation. Many mauka-makai streets are used for on-street parking serving residents and businesses.



left: Lewers Street

above: Paoakalani Street

the Vision

vision statement

Pedestrian traffic will be encouraged along Mauka-Makai Streets, the character of the individual neighborhoods will be highlighted and developed.

The vision for mauka-makai streets is to take advantage of opportunities for enhancing and defining their neighborhood character.

At various meetings, Waikiki residents expressed that street security is a fundamental concern, especially at night. For mauka-makai streets to have a “neighborhood” character, residents said they need to have a sense of “street security”.

In the future, mauka-makai streets that are inadequately lit will have lighting fixtures with dual lamps, one for the street and the other for the sidewalk. Landowners will be encouraged to modify landscaping near sidewalks to eliminate brush that could be perceived by pedestrians as concealing lurking threats.

Five mauka-makai streets are recommended to be converted to two-way traffic flow, eliminating circuitous movements while maintaining overall flow of traffic.

More sidewalk space will be provided for mauka-makai streets with sub-standard or no sidewalks. For mauka-makai streets that experience significant pedestrian volume, especially those streets between Kuhio Avenue and Kalakaua Avenue, sidewalks will be widened.

Sidewalk “bulb-outs” at street intersections that will improve pedestrian safety by shortening street crossings and alerting motorists with narrower turning lanes. Some mauka-makai streets will be enhanced with new street trees and some will gain more street parking by converting parallel parking to angled parking stalls, which will also calm traffic speeds. Existing metered parking stalls will be converted to “smart” parking meters that can be programmed to charge rates favoring residents using special debit cards.



Nohonani Street



Public Process

The Waikiki Livable Community Project's Livability & Mobility Report culminates the many hours of public meetings, workshops, data collecting and technical analysis. The input received through this community-based planning process was the most important factor in formulating, refining, and integrating concepts and ideas presented in this report.



From Top: 1. Development Issues Meetings (Oct 2001); 2. Design Charette (Dec 2001); 3. Issues Update Meetings (Sept 2002); 4. Open House Workshop (Oct 2002); 5&6. "Talk Story" Meetings (Apr-May 2003)

Issues Development Meetings

October 2001

Participants

Hotel/Hospitality Tour & Shuttle Taxi & Limosines Retail & Commercial Public Agencies	Streetscape, Open Space, Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Deliveries
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Design Charrette

December 2001

Participants

Project Consultant Team

Data Gathering

May and July 2002

Kuhio Avenue & Kalakaua Avenue
Pedestrian/Loading and Bicycle Survey

Issues Update Meetings

September 2002

Participants

Hotel/Hospitality Tour & Shuttle Taxi & Limosines Retail & Commercial Public Agencies	Streetscape, Open Space, Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Deliveries
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Open House Workshop

October 2002

Data Gathering

January 2003

Ala Wai Boulevard Parking
Survey

"Talk Story" Meetings

April-May 2003

Participants

Residential Meetings: Ainakea-Ohua Area Ohua-Kanekapolei Area Kanekapolei-Lewers Area Hobron Area	Stakeholders: Hotel/Hospitality Tour & Shuttle Taxi & Limosines Retail & Commercial Deliveries	Community Groups: Vision Group Waikiki Neighborhood Board Diamond Head-Kapahulu- St. Louis Neighborhood
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Conclusion

December 2003



For more information

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